

2

~~SECRET~~
~~NOFORN~~

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

[REDACTED]

USSR: Biological Warfare (BW) Accident in Sverdlovsk
~~(S-NF)~~

Recent intelligence strengthens allegations that an accident at a BW installation caused civilian casualties in southern Sverdlovsk during April 1979.

A recent [REDACTED] report is consistent with previous rumors and supporting data about an accident at a BW installation in Sverdlovsk. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] claimed that an explosion in a laboratory of a secret BW plant resulted in more than 200 casualties. The site of the accident is consistent with the location of a military installation suspected of BW activities, but there is no positive photographic evidence of an explosion.

The casualties and the measures taken by the military and health agencies were officially blamed on an outbreak of anthrax in Sverdlovsk. An announcement about an anthrax epidemic in a public health context appears to have been designed to prevent a possible panic among Sverdlovsk's million-plus population. The magnitude of the epidemic and the causative organism remain conjecture.

[REDACTED] supported previous reports stating that pathogenic bacteria allegedly escaped into the air and spread over industrial and residential areas of southern Sverdlovsk. The military immediately imposed quarantine and decontamination procedures, but the situation was not brought under control until late May or early June. Source claimed that Defense Minister D. Ustinov and Health Minister B. Petrovskiy came to Sverdlovsk, probably to assess the situation.

Approved for Release _____

Date 6-10-96

[REDACTED]
28 Jan 80

1
~~SECRET~~

(8)

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED] at the hospital were directed to transfer all infected persons and their contacts to the Army Hospital for Infectious Diseases in Sverdlovsk. Civilian doctors were not permitted to treat the patients.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
28 Jan 80

~~SECRET~~